4/17/70

Dear Howard,

Your letter of the 14th arrived today, when I'm piled up with letters and have two legal things to get done by the a.m.

Skolnick: unless you letters have not been reaching you, by now you know. However, one thing in your letter is very important: How did you know the docs are from CD# 47 (wrong pages)? Is this in any way connected with him? If this comes from a newspaper acount, by all means, please make every effort to get it for me. It is urgent.

Panthers: haven't time for complete answer. Most of what I know is in COUP II. However, I was so certain there'd be something like the Hampton murder, in the kind of ellipsis you are by now familiar with, it was, in my way, forecast in the book before it happened. Regardless of whether the Panthers are right or wrong, the police are wrong, and they represent authority and society, the same authority and society that has for 300 years denied the blacks their rights while exploiting them. I believe local police police on the violence against the Panthers is inspired by Hoover, who has always hated blacks and long before you were born was the darling of and connected with the most reactionary/racist groups. I do not believe it is within possibility, to answer your specific question, that there was any legitimate police "self defense".

I do not know enough about the Panthers to give you the kind of opinion you seek. In my opinion, while they turn me off in many ways, including with an experience I had with them the anniversary of King's murder, they are, really, interested in self defense, are not really going out and looking for people to shoot, are trying to instill racial pride in their people and may well be the least racist black militant group. I have never had any direct contact with them. I think you'd find contacting the local leader a worthwhile experience, if he'll take the time.

To answer your question about police brutality: my personal experience with this kinf o thing goes back to the 30s, when there was no question about it. Not only blacks, either, but every minority, like Latins, yellows, etc. I am convinced it is more true today, with police concept of minority having assumed politicel dimensions also. Example: today the Arlington County, Va (accross river from DC) police fired two rookies who went to a peace demonstration <u>in Washington</u> when they were <u>off duty</u> and pulled their service pistols on and were beating the demonstrators. They were saved by DC cops, who thought them undercover agents! It is, unfortunately, only two true. But do make make too wide a generalization for police are like other, individuals, and they are by no means all this way.

If I can't be of much help now, I do have a large file you can consult in the future if you preserve the interest. Hurriedly.

HW